

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Extended School Program

## **How can I reach a member of the ESP, Kindergarten Enrichment or Preschool staff?**

You can reach the ESP, Kindergarten Enrichment and Preschool staff by phone. If no one is available to answer your call, you can leave a message on voice mail. Voice mail is checked throughout the day. The phone number for the E.S.P. Office is 734-821-2290. The Preschool phone number is 734-821-2292.

What types of activities will my child participate in while they are in ESP, Kindergarten Enrichment and Preschool?

The program is organized so that children have a choice of activities to participate in throughout the day. Choices may include outdoor play, organized sports, arts and crafts, table games, small group games, science, cooking, music, drama, computer, and other educational, but fun, activities. Children are able to participate in both large and small group activities as well as individual projects. In addition to the activities presented by the teachers, children are encouraged to develop activity ideas themselves.

In the after-school program the younger children (preschool-first grade) are in self-contained rooms with a designated staff. Older children (2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade) alternate between similar age groupings and mixed age groupings, depending on the specific activity and the time of day. A supervised homework club is offered in the after-school program for children in grades 2nd through 6th. Many special enrichment activities and special classes are offered throughout the year to the students enrolled in the after-school program.

## **My child is enrolled in the after-school program. He keeps talking about choice time. What is it and how does it work?**

During the primary activity period 2<sup>nd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade children are offered choices and get to pick what they will do. The children are usually offered two or three activities. The activities are explained to the children. Names are then called and the children pick the activity they want to participate in. Occasionally, there are age or number restrictions placed on one of the activities. Free play is usually an additional option in some of the activity areas. Children in this age group are able to move between activities and rooms.

The Preschool, Kindergarten and First Grade children are offered choices within the self-contained classroom environment. Several play areas and centers are set up and children are able to make choices and move between activities.

The ESP room is really small. Will my children be in this room the entire time they are in ESP?

The ESP room is always used for the before-school program.

The before and after-kindergarten children spend most of their day in the ESP room. The kindergartners go outside each day and also have time in the gym. The group is small and does well in this room.

During the after-school program, we utilize several different rooms throughout the school building. During snack and check-in time children are in several rooms to allow for settling in with a similar age group and consistent staff. During the activity periods we use the ESP room, preschool room, kindergarten room, music room, computer lab and library, room 3A, playgrounds and Winchel Park.

## **Why doesn't ESP use the gym each day for large motor activities during the after-school program?**

St. Francis is an elementary and middle school. The middle school has a very large extracurricular sports program. This sports program at St. Francis School is very important to the middle school student's development. When a school serves both elementary and middle school children, it is often difficult to meet

all of the needs and desires of all of the school related groups. The extracurricular sports program has first choice on the use of the gym. ESP uses the gym when it is available on normal school days and always gets to use the gym during no-school day programs.

### **How do I signup for a drop-in day?**

First, only families enrolled in the program may use the drop-in program. Enrolled families needing drop-in care for a specific day can schedule the day with the ESP, Enrichment Kindergarten and Preschool director. The number of drop-in spaces available on a given day is based on the number of free spaces left after the regular attendance numbers are totaled. Drop-in space is allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. You may schedule drop-in days up to two months in advance. Families are expected to pay for all of the drop-in days they schedule unless they call in advance to cancel the scheduled day.

### **How do I register for a no-school day program?**

You may register for a no-school day program by submitting a completed registration form and payment to the ESP, Enrichment Kindergarten and Preschool office by the registration deadline date. Forms for upcoming no-school days can be found in the monthly newsletter via the school Edline site. Forms are also available in the ESP office.

### **Why do I have to register for no-school days when I have already indicated the days of the week I need care?**

Participation in no-school day programs is not a given even if your child usually attends ESP, Enrichment Kindergarten or Preschool on the day of the week that there is no school. Families need to register for specifically for each no-school or half-day program. Many parents make a decision to take the day off or find alternate care for their child on these days to give them a break from the school environment. Some families who do not use the after-school program on a regular basis do need care until the time school would normally be dismissed.

Also, the cost of providing care on no-school days is very different than on regular schooldays. The registration process allows us to offer families a fee structure based on pick up time. Requiring registration helps us to know how many children to expect. Program is planned based on the registered number of children.

### **Why do you have a deadline for registering for no-school days?**

On many no-school days we go on field trips, provide lunch or do some other special program activity. Transportation plans and site reservations need to be arranged prior to the day of the trip. Some of the places we visit require advance payment. Some sites require a final confirmation of the number of children attending a week prior to the visit. We need to allow time to meet these restrictions. Program and meal supplies need to be purchased in advance of the no-school day.

Staffing is also a concern on no-school days. When we go on field trips we often need a higher staff to student ratio. Many of the ESP, Enrichment Kindergarten and Preschool staff are college students. Some staff have more than one job. Some staff may have children at home on the no-school days. It takes time and planning to rearrange work schedules. Sometimes, it is necessary to find additional adults to go on field trips.